

Testimony to Public Health Committee Public Hearing March 18, 2019

Submitted by Sue Kautz, RN Haddam, CT

Dear Co-Chair Abrams, Co-Chair Steinberg, Vice Chair Lesser, Vice Chair Young, Ranking Member Somers, Ranking Member Petit, and Honorable Members of the Public Health Committee

Please accept this testimony in SUPPORT of HB 5898, An ACT CONCERNING Aid IN DYING FOR THE TERMINALLY ILL PATIENTS.

As a retired HOSPICE homecare nurse and voting resident of Connecticut, I urge you to please SUPPORT this Bill. In my many years as a Hospice RN, I saw various end of life illnesses, and the full spectrum of pain, anxiety and fear of dying issues among my patients. Some patients' symptoms were controlled, but not all. For those symptoms not controlled, I feel that this bill could fill that gap if so desired by the patient of sound mind with less than 6 months to live.

I have seen and felt the pain that patients and their families endure as pain, anxiety, and fear progressively increases towards the end. Morphine and other narcotics and pain medicine used for these symptoms are helpful, however, with the increasingly higher doses needed for symptom control, there can be side effects of decreased awareness and mobility, nausea, increased incontinence and NON-EFFECTIVE pain control. A patient should be granted the right and choice to end his life with dignity and awareness and not endure progressively higher doses of medications and side effects and other indignities the dying process may bring.

In addition, just because the patient requests this option, does not mean they have to follow through with it if they later choose not to. It is just another tool in the toolbox to ease suffering in the death and dying process.

Furthermore, any medical doctor who does not want to provide Aid in Dying will not be required to prescribe it. Doctors who DO want to provide Aid in Dying must do so in addition to a second MD also prescribing it. This would occur after the patient of sound mind makes two requests for this option to end his or her life in this manner.

I for one want to live in a state that has medical Aid in Dying as an option. I never want to have to endure the pain, anxiety and fear I have witnessed in so many. I am considering a move to another state, if necessary, to affirm my right to choose and I personally know many others in this state that feel this same way.

Thank You for your consideration in SUPPORT of HB 5898.

Respectfully,

Sue Kautz, RN

Haddam, Connecticut